

Robert and Mary

A Missionary Romance

BY
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Missionary Education Movement of the
United States and Canada

160 Fifth Avenue

New York

SUGGESTIONS FOR COSTUMES



THE COURTESY (Act II, Scene I)

VRAU VANDERVICKER



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A Missionary Romance of South Africa

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This little play is a dramatization of the love story of Robert and Mary Moffat, the first great pioneer missionaries to South Africa. The story is told in *The Moffats* by Ethel Daniels Hubbard, (Publisher, Missionary Education Movement, 160 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Cloth, sixty cents; paper, forty cents.) Wherever possible the historic words of the various occasions, as repeated by Robert Moffat himself in *Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa*, are used, notably in Act III, Scene I.

SCENES

ACT I

SCENE I

The home of Mary in Dukinfield, England.

ACT II

SCENE I

The Boer homestead, South Africa.

SCENE 2

The home of Mary in Dukinfield, England.

ACT III

SCENE I

The Boer Homestead, South Africa.

SCENE 2

The Boer Homestead, South Africa.

CHARACTERS

ROBERT MOFFAT, a young Scotch missionary.

MR. JAMES SMITH, a Scotch nursery gardener of Dukinfield, England.

MRS. SMITH, his English wife.

MARY SMITH, daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

JANE, an old Scotch maid servant to Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

MARGARET, AGNES, ISOBEL, and PHYLLIS, young friends of Mary Smith.

MYNHEER VANDERICKER, a pioneer Boer farmer of South Africa.

VRAU VANDERICKER, his wife.

KATRINA VANDERICKER, eldest daughter of Mynheer and Vrau Vandervicker.

WILHELMINA AND JULIANA, youngest daughters of same. (The character of Juliana may be taken by a real child if desired.)

COSTUMES

For costumes of Robert Moffat and the Smith family, see illustrations in *The Moffats* and in this play.

It is suggested that Mary Moffat wear pink in Act I, white in Act II, and a long dark cape over her pink dress, with a straw traveling hat in Act III.

It would be appropriate for Robert Moffat to wear dark blue with a buff waistcoat except in Act III, Scene I, when his suit should be obviously old and worn.

For Boer costumes see pictures of Dutch costumes. Katrina, Wilhelmina, and Juliana may be dressed alike in blue and white, with the white Dutch cap.

MUSIC

A piano and violin are suggested. The selections are given at the points in which they occur during the play.

NOTE—If the play is given at a time of year when flowers are not abundant, artificial flowers may be easily made from bare branches to which bits of pink tissue-paper are twisted, like peach-blossoms.

Prelude before Curtain

Solo, "Highland Mary." The instrumental music is continued after the opening of the curtain, for a few seconds.

ACT I

Scene 1

The living-room in the home of Mary at Dukinfield. An old-fashioned room. Four old-fashioned chairs, a small sewing-table placed stage right (audience left); a fireplace back center; tall candlesticks on mantel; small candle on sewing-table; a few flowers about the room. Time: evening.

Mary is discovered seated on the audience side of the table, sewing.

VOICE BEHIND SCENE

Mary!

(Enter hastily, stage left, Robert Moffat.)

ROBERT

Mary! Mary! I've been accepted by the London Missionary Society at last!

MARY

(Rising quickly to meet him, stage center.)

I knew they would accept you, Robert! I knew! They'd have to see that you were fit—oh, to do great things for the Lord. What's a college degree to stand in the way when it's you, Robert—Aye, you?

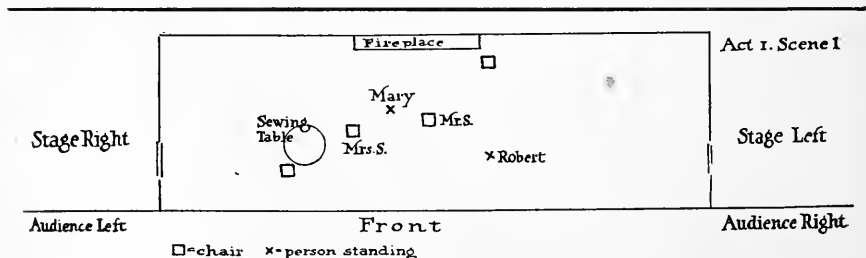
ROBERT

(Putting his arm about Mary.)

There, there, Mary, you think too highly of me. It's just that I'm ready to work with every ounce of strength in my being for the cause of Christ in any land where the Lord needs me most.

MARY

Oh, Robert, I'm so proud of you. It makes me glad, glad to know that other men have seen your worth. When will they send you? Does the letter say?



ROBERT

(Consulting letter.)

It says just—"make ready for sailing within a few months for a country which shall be designated after you reach London."

MARY

(Sinking into chair.)

Must you go so soon, Robert? I had not thought of that.

ROBERT

Why, what matters, Mary, if you go with me—Mary, my own bride?

MARY

But Robert, my mother and father—

ROBERT

They know that we are betrothed. I asked your father's leave to wed you, and he gave me his blessing.

MARY

Ah, yes, but when the London Missionary Society had refused your offer. But here they come.

(Enter, stage right, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, the latter leaning feebly on her husband's arm. For convenience in the action, although it is a breach of stage etiquette, Mr. Smith walks on the audience side.)

Father—mother—Robert is accepted!

ROBERT

(Meeting Mr. Smith, stage center, while Mary tenderly seats her mother, stage right, and remains standing by her side.)

The post just brought this letter, sir, from the London Missionary Society. Mr. Roby's efforts have been successful in convincing these gentlemen that I can be of service in the mission field.

MR. SMITH

(Shaking Robert's hand.)

Aye, Robert, ye're a bonnie laddie, and ye hae my congratulations. It's a grand work before ye.

(He steps back, stage center, and is seated.)

MRS. SMITH

Yes, lad, but your mother? What will she say when she learns that her boy is going to teach the heathen?

ROBERT

(Stage left.)

What will mother say? *(Pauses a moment, gazing off into space.)* Why, it is she who sends me! Did she not bid me search the Scriptures every day? I did, and there I found my commission. Mother—how proud she will be of this day!

MRS. SMITH

Yes, but to send a son forth—never to see his face again!

MARY

Oh, mother, do not say that! Think of her joy that her son is chosen of the Lord for this princely work.

ROBERT

Yes, a royal work, and can you spare a daughter for it?

MRS. SMITH

My daughter? My Mary? My only little girl? What are you saying, Robert?

MARY

Mother, father, you know that Robert and I have plighted troth. Would you have Robert go alone?

MR. SMITH

(*Springing up.*)

Robert! O shame upon ye! Would ye take our bairn we've raised so delicate, out to heathen wilds? How could she eat the fare ye'll have, and sleep upon the ground, surrounded by the savage beasts, and—far worse—savage men?

MARY

Oh, father, am I too good for the Lord's work?

MRS. SMITH

Mary, child, would you leave me all alone?

MARY

Oh, mother dear, do not think that I do not love you, that I would not give my life for you and my father, but you have my three brothers to comfort you. You will not be desolate. This is the Lord's call. Even when I was a school-girl at Fairfield, I prayed that God would send me to South Africa. It was presumptuous, I know, but 'twould be worth a thousand lives to go!

MRS. SMITH

Mary, I may be wrong, but I cannot give you up—I cannot! Would you take her from us, Robert?

ROBERT

I will not plead either for the cause or for myself.

MR. SMITH

Mary, ye hear? He gies ye up.

MRS. SMITH

Mary, I may not be here long. Can a son ever fill a daughter's place? Who will tend me when I'm sick? And shall a stranger's hand close my eyes in their last sleep? O Mary, Mary, would you leave your old mother, never, never to see her face again?

MARY

Mother, mother!

MR. SMITH

Never will ye go with my consent, Mary! (*Crossing over to his wife.*) There, mither, *dinna greet*. (Do not grieve.) Come away to yer ain room. Ye're all upset. Our Mary is a good girl—aye, the best. She'll do her duty by ye, never fear! (*Exeunt both, stage right.*)

(*There is an instant's pause as Mary and Robert face one another alone.*)

MARY

Robert, must you go? Is there not much good you could do right here in England or in Scotland? All would be so easy if you would only preach like other men here at home. There would be no hard, hard decision then to make; no heart-breaking leave to take. All would be so happy then. And surely, surely there is work for the Lord to be done here, right at our door!

ROBERT

And many hands to do it. Do you wish me to stay, Mary? Shall I renounce

the great commission, and remain quietly here at home, re-furrowing the old soil for a meager harvest?

MARY

(After a pause.)

No, Robert, no, not that easy, tame work, when you have been called, yea, and accepted as God's ambassador to carry the gospel to heathen lands. No, I would not have you stay.

ROBERT

And you, Mary?

MARY

(After a pause, gazing out toward audience.)

Robert—I must—stay.

ROBERT

(After a pause.)

And I—must go. But Mary—surely, surely, some day we shall be together! Such love as ours cannot die. It must win through! Who knows, Mary? Perhaps before I sail God will move your father and mother to give their consent.

MARY

O Robert, they are old and full of fears they cannot conquer. They cannot change so easily.

ROBERT

Well, then, we may have to wait a little while perhaps, and then—you'll come to me!

MARY

Robert, Robert! Impelled by feelings I cannot master, held back by ties I dare not break—where can I find courage?

ROBERT

There is only one place, Mary, one place, and one Comforter. We shall both need him. *(Taking her hand.)* And now, good night, my Mary.—In the lane to-morrow?

MARY

I have courage when I'm with you. I could face anything with you beside me, Robert. Yes, we'll meet to-morrow, in the lane.

(Robert lingers for a moment, raises her hand to his lips, turns at the door for one last look, and then goes quickly. The scene becomes dark except for the candles. "We'd better bide a wee" is softly played off stage—on the violin, if possible—while Mary slowly lifts the candles down from the tall mantel and blows them out one after another. She bends above the flowers on the table for a moment, and then picking up the small candle from beside them, goes softly out stage right.)

CURTAIN

Music between acts:

Vocal solo, "My heart's in the Highlands." Violin alone, just before curtain, "Highland Mary."

ACT II

Scene 1

(The Boer homestead in South Africa.)

The same room as in Act I may be used, changed by a few additions and subtractions into a Dutch interior. Delft plates adorn the mantel. There are old-time wooden chairs or small benches on either side of the fireplace. Instead of the little sewing-table at which Mary sat, there is a bare deal table, at stage left back, on which a pot of tulips blooms. There are a few high-backed wooden armchairs also in the room, the skins of animals adorn the floor in lieu of rugs. An old-fashioned musket stands in one corner. Time: morning.

Robert Moffat is discovered sitting upon a chair or bench (stage right, audience left), gazing into the fire. As the curtain rises, he lays down his violin beside him as if he had just finished playing.

Enter Katrina, Wilhelmina, and Juliana, stage right, one after another, humming "Highland Mary." They tiptoe in, holding out their wide skirts, and each as she discovers Moffat, courtesies low, but wrapped in thought, Moffat does not look up. The girls then line up in front of the fireplace and simultaneously courtesy. Looking at each other with significant glances, they again courtesy deeply. At last Moffat becomes aware of their presence and glances up, springing to his feet.

MOFFAT

Oh, I beg your pardon, Katrina, Wilhelmina, and Juliana. I did not notice.

WILHELMINA

Mynheer does not notice when he plays the music. (Hums last bars of "Highland Mary.")

JULIANA

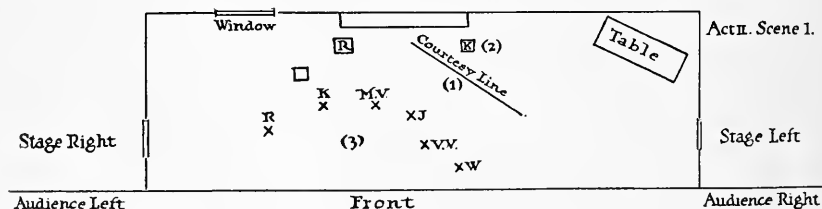
What is that song Mynheer makes so much on his fiddle?

MOFFAT

That is—

KATRINA

For shame, Juliana! You and Wilhelmina run along to your tasks. You should not trouble Mynheer so much.



1. Position of girls during courtesy. Smallest girl nearest audience.
2. Katrina during first part of conversation alone with Robert.
3. General position of characters during last part of scene. Characters must not be afraid to step backward or forward or change their positions naturally during the farewell.

MOFFAT

Do not scold them, Katrina, I shall miss them very much when I am gone.

KATRINA

Mynheer goes soon?

MOFFAT

I leave this morning for Namaqualand. The men are yoking the oxen now.
(*Looks out of window.*)

WILHELMINA AND JULIANA

Oh, Mynheer!

MOFFAT

They are ready now, I see. I must bid your kind family good-by.

KATRINA

Run, Wilhelmina and Juliana, and call our mother and father.

(*Exit Wilhelmina, pouting, stage left, audience right.*)

JULIANA

(*Pausing near exit.*)

But the song Mynheer?

MOFFAT

It is called "Highland Mary."

JULIANA

(*Courtesying and running off singing.*)

Highland Mary!

KATRINA

It is a song of your homeland, Mynheer?

MOFFAT

Yes, it is a song of home.

KATRINA

(*Sighing.*)

It is beautiful.

MOFFAT

(*Abstractedly.*)

She is beautiful.

KATRINA

(*Quickly.*)

Ah, Mary?

MOFFAT

What is that? I beg your pardon. I see that I was thinking again.

KATRINA

(*Gently.*)

She is a very dear friend, Mynheer?

MOFFAT

Since you have discovered my secret, I will tell you that I hope some day she will come to Africa as my wife.

KATRINA

Africa is a hard land, Mynheer. Yet my mother gave up the balls and parties of Amsterdam to come with my father to his farm.

MOFFAT

And Mary would come to Afrikaner's Kraal, if she were free.

KATRINA

Mynheer, Mynheer, still do you cling to that mad project of visiting Afrikaner?

(*Enter Mynheer Vanderzicker, his wife and the children, stage left.*)

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

So you are going, my son, to preach to these black men?

MOFFAT

I humbly hope to do so.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

If you wish a congregation of that kind, I will call in my dogs. As soon can you talk to them as to these Hottentots. They have no souls. Stay here among Christians and preach to us. Gladly will we welcome you.

MOFFAT

"And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she answered, Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Eh, well, well, have your black men, then; only keep away from that murderer, Afrikaner.

MOFFAT

But to him I am sent. He has asked the London Missionary Society for a missionary to teach his people, and they have sent me. He is a Christian now.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Tut, tut! Never believe that, Mynheer Robert!

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Eh, the lion fondles the sheep now. He no longer eats them! 'Tis a new fashion.

MOFFAT

Nevertheless he has asked for me.

KATRINA

But Mynheer, did he not drive that devoted missionary, Christian Albrecht, out of his country?

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Did he not murder the farmer whom he served?

MOFFAT

Was he treated with justice by that farmer?

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

These Bushmen and Hottentots did not cultivate the soil and use it properly. We Boers could. To the Boers should it belong. Afrikaner has defied the colonial government for years. A great price is set upon his head. He lives by murder and theft. The Boer farmers has he robbed and murdered. He is a terror to the tribes to the north. No commando sent out against him could take him. Afrikaner a Christian—*ja!*—. It is a trick to add the murder of a fine young man to his already long list.

MOFFAT

Well, then, I will die, if necessary. But first I will find whether Afrikaner be a Christian, and if he is not, I will use every power the Lord has given me to win him to the cause of Christ.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

But the desert, my son? You do not know our African deserts, and you must cross one to reach Afrikaner. For days you will not find a drop of fresh water to moisten your lips.

JULIANA

(Coming out to stage center.)

Oh, Mynheer, do not go! My nurse, who is a woman of the Bushmen, says every night the lions roar and kill—in the desert.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Hush, child, the young man is mad! He will not listen.

MOFFAT

(Taking Vrau Vandervicker's hand.)

Well, I must say good-by.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

(Wiping her eyes.)

Oh, Mynheer, had you been an old man, it would have been nothing, for you would soon have died, whether or no; but you are young, and going to be a prey to that monster!

MOFFAT

There, mother Vandervicker, do not grieve on my account. I have strong faith that the Lord has called me to this work, and I do not fear.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

But if you were my son—

MOFFAT

My mother and those who hold me dear have bidden me go!

VRAU VANDERVICKER

I cannot understand such heartlessness.

MOFFAT

(Shaking hands with Wilhelmina.)

Good-by, Wilhelmina. *(Wilhelmina courtesies.)* God be with you, my little Juliana *(to Juliana, who courtesies, or if she is a small child, kisses him).*

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

And with you. You'll need Him!

MOFFAT

(Shaking hands with Mynheer Vandervicker.)

I thank you for all your kindness, and for the rest and refreshment you have given to me and to my cattle.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Well, stop again if you ever pass this way—which I do not expect, for as sure as I live, Afrikaner will set you up as a mark for his boys to shoot at. He will make of your skin a drum to dance with.

KATRINA

(As Moffat takes her hand.)

You say, Mynheer, the men have souls?

MOFFAT

That is the reason why I go.

KATRINA

I will remember, Mynheer.

CURTAIN

Vocal music as soon as curtain closes:
"The son of God goes forth to war."

Scene 2

The home of Mary in Dukinfield, England. The same living-room as in Act. I. Time: afternoon.

Music:

As the curtain is drawn, the music of "We'd better bide a wee" is very faintly heard, played on the violin.

Jane, the Smith's Scotch housemaid, is discovered sweeping the hearth with a goose-wing, while Mary sits by the sewing-table, stage right, embroidering. She takes a few stitches and then her hands drop in her lap, while she gazes off into space. Jane glances at her from time to time, over her shoulder. At last she drops her brush and goes to her.

JANE

There, my bairn, dinna greet. Dinna greet!

MARY

(*Laughing.*)

Why, Jane, I wasn't greeting. I was just—thinking a minute. No, I'm too busy—and happy, to greet. There's that family of Robin Goodwin. Poor Robin always was a shiftless fellow. I'm making this little dress for his baby. I must hurry. Lettice told me Annie was sick again, too. Jane, you'll make some nice broth for me to take to her when I carry this little dress to the baby?

JANE

Ah, my bairn, is there no hope then? Will yer mither and father never see that when twa young things love like ye and Robbie, ye should be tagither?

MARY

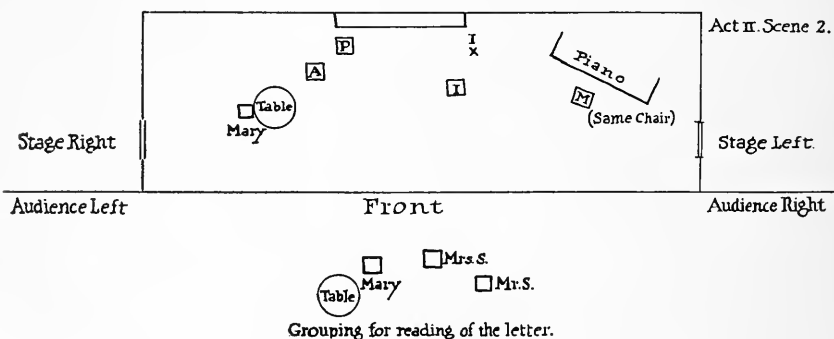
Hush, Jane. There's duty as well as love in the world. Robert is doing his duty—such a splendid, splendid duty—and I am trying to do mine. We could not be happy otherwise.

JANE

Then there's na hope at a', bairn?

MARY

No, Jane—not of that sort. I have written Robert that it is settled once and for all. My parents will never consent. It would be only weakening to Robert in his great work to go on hoping in vain. It is better for us both to



ARRANGEMENT FOR TEA-DRINKING GROUP AS INDICATED.

Margaret at piano and Isobel standing during songs.

When the guests enter the chairs are brought forward from various positions: The seating should not be anticipated in the stage setting.

face the facts squarely. I feel a great deal stronger, now that I know definitely what is before me in my life.

JANE
(*Sighing.*)

Ah, bairn, bairn!

MARY
There Jane, dear, don't trouble any more about me, and believe me when I tell you that I'm happy. Now go and make me the best broth you know how for poor Annie.

JANE
Weel, weel—but I hear the knocker. (*Goes hastily out, stage left, where voices are heard behind the scene.*)
(*Enter, stage left, audience right, four young women.*)

ALL
(*Gaily.*)

Good day, Mary!

MARY
(*Courtesying and going forward hospitably.*)
How do you do, all of you? Come in and be seated. (*The conversation continues through the action.*)

PHYLLIS
We began to think you had eloped with some fine young man you had met in Manchester, last time you went with your father.

AGNES
Or you had become a fay and vanished up the chimney.

ISOBEL
Oh, I've caught glimpses of Mary now and then, disappearing down some poor lane. If you want Mary's attention, friends, you must wear a ragged coat and tell her the sad tale that you haven't eaten since yesterday.

MARY
Oh, girls—girls!

MARGARET
No, it is her Sunday-school class. Those little rowdy boys—

MARY
They are not rowdies, Margaret. They are fine and manly—

PHYLLIS
Listen, would you, those terrors of the town, and (*mimicking Mary*)—"they are fine and manly!"

(*Jane enters stage right with a tray of tea things which she places on Mary's table. She remains and passes the cups unobtrusively.*)

ISOBEL
Oh, well, we all know there have been no more windows broken and no more linen stolen from the lines since Mary took those boys into her capable hands.

MARY
(*As she pours the tea.*)
It's just that they've never had a chance before—

AGNES
Now Mary, please attend to the things of this world for a space.

MARY

(Passing her a teacup, since she sits next.)

I am. Will you have some tea?

MARGARET

Oh, I'm bursting with the news, Mary—*(All draw closer.)*

AGNES

Mary—

ISOBEL

Mary—

PHYLLIS

Janet is to be married on Thursday!

MARY

Why, I never dreamed so soon, and I have not my gift ready.

AGNES

None of us have for that matter, but David has been called to the kirk at Langholm, and so their plans have changed. Janet is so happy.

MARY

I'm so glad for her. David and she have been such happy lovers.

MARGARET

She has shown me her wedding garments. You must see them, Mary. They are beautiful.

MARY

I should love to.

ISOBEL

They say her wedding-gown will be of white pineapple silk, and comes from London.

PHYLLIS

My mother says 'tis a scandal for a dominie's bride to be dressed so fine.

MARY

Ah, no, her gown should match her happiness, if possible.

MARGARET

Janet will make a sweet mistress of the manse. I can see her pouring tea for the ladies of her congregation. *(Mary laughs.)* Mary, what are you laughing about?

MARY

I was thinking of the many things a minister's wife must do besides pour tea for guests.

MARGARET

Now you're too practical, Mary. Do let us dream a little.

MARY

I wonder what a mistress of the manse would do in South Africa.

ALL

South Africa!

MARGARET

Horrible! What are you thinking of? Why, there they do not live long enough even to pour tea.

ISOBEL

Oh, by the by. Have you heard anything of that splendid young man who

worked in your father's nursery last year, and was sent by the London Missionary Society to South Africa?

*(Jane reenters, stage right, collects cups and removes tray.
Exit stage right.)*

MARY

We heard that he reached the coast in safety.

MARGARET

I know it was heroic for him to go, still, such devotion is beyond my understanding. *(Meditatively.)* Now Mary—I could dream that you would do a thing like that.

AGNES

Then how fortunate he did not try to take our Mary with him!

MARY

(Hastily.)

Come, let's have some music. Isobel, I haven't heard you sing for weeks.

ISOBEL

(Going to the piano up stage left, at which Margaret has seated herself.)

That was your good fortune, my Mary. *(She sings "Comin' thro' the rye.")*

PHYLLIS

You are too frivolous, Isobel. Give us something suited to our mature years.

ISOBEL

Very well, here's something that ought to please any lovelorn spinster. *(Whispers to pianist and sings "Annie Laurie" or "Robin Adair.")*

ALL

(Applauding.)

Encore! Encore!

ISOBEL

Farewell, ladies. I can no more. *(All rise.)*

MARY

Thank you so much for the music, Isobel.

AGNES

Mary, please think of something we can all do for Janet before she is wed, to show our love. We shall miss her greatly. She is the first of our circle to flit.

MARY

I'll try to think.

MARGARET

Yes, do, Mary. You have the longest thoughts of any of us. We can always depend on you to think of something kind and worth while to do for some one else.

ALL

(Courtesying.)

Good-by, Mary.

MARY

(Courtesying.)

Good-by, my dears.

(Exeunt visitors.) Mary turns back to the table, humming the last song. She picks up her sewing, still humming, and seats herself in Agnes' place.

MARY

(Dropping her work.)

Oh, Robert! Robert! *(She buries her face in her arms on the table.)*

MR. SMITH

(Calling excitedly behind scene.)

Mary!

MARY

(Springing up.)

Yes, father!

(Enter Mr. Smith, followed by Mrs. Smith, stage left.)

MR. SMITH

Mary, the post has just brought a letter to you from South Africa—from Robert Moffat! *(Mary tears open the envelope.)*

MRS. SMITH

What does the lad say? *(She sits down stage center, her husband taking the chair on her left, Mary seated on her right.)*

MARY

Here it is: *(Reads.)*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

On the 26th of January, 1818, I arrived, with emotions of the deepest gratitude to God, at Afrikaner's Kraal. You can picture my emotions when at last I stood face to face with that famous chief, so hated, so dreaded by white and black alike!

"You are young," he said, "but I hope you will live long with me and my people."

But alas! A terrible quarrel arose between Titus, the brother of Afrikaner, and my colleague, Mr. Ebner, who, in great excitement, left the station with his family. So here am I alone in the heart of Great Namaqualand. Hardly did I know which way to turn in my inexperience, nor what to do.

Now, although it seems a miracle, I am beginning to win the friendship of the dreaded Afrikaner. He hath learned to read the Bible, and seems to me not far from the Kingdom. His fierce and terrible brother, Titus, has also done me many kindnesses. My heart overflows with gratitude at these tokens of divine grace.

As for me, I am carpenter, smith, cooper, tailor, shoemaker, miller, baker, and housekeeper—the last the most burdensome of any. Indeed, none is burdensome but it. But what are petty inconveniences or even the sacrifice of separation from those most near and dear? Have I not Afrikaner for my hire? In the midst of my greatest hardships I felt as I do at this moment, that I desire to suffer anything, even death itself, if but Christ is glorified in the salvation of the poor heathen.

Still I have the hope, dear friend, that some time in God's good providence you shall stand by my side with me, ministering to these heathen souls, a constant inspiration and solace to me. If one may serve the Lord alone, is not the service doubly strong of two?

I must conclude, desiring to remain your most affectionate but unworthy friend,

ROBERT MOFFAT.

MRS. SMITH

Father, Mary—I can stand in the way no longer. I durst not. This is the Lord's will.

MR. SMITH

(Springing up.)

Mither, do ye say that word? Have ye the courage? Do ye ken what it means?

MRS. SMITH

"I desire to suffer anything even death itself, if but Christ is glorified in the salvation of the poor heathen"—those were Robert's own words. Shall we hinder him? Shall we hinder Mary? Dare we?

MR. SMITH

(*After turning away for an instant and pacing up and down.*)

Mary, ye may go!

MARY

Father, mother—but you said never! Surely you do not mean it? Oh, you would not jest! Tell me again! (*Kneels by her mother's side.*)

MRS. SMITH

(*Taking her husband's hand and speaking calmly.*)

It is true, Mary. Aye, we have been questioning in secret this many a day, although our words to you were firm enough. But the lad's letter has done it. God has given us strength enough for this day, and he will give it for all the days to come. I'm at rest now.

MARY

Oh, mother, father! It seems as if it would kill me to leave you, my dear, dear parents. Yet I must go (*rising*). I must go if you are willing. I would sink beneath the weight of conscience did I linger. And Robert—I have written him destroying his last hope, bidding him never think of our marriage again. And he must receive that letter alone—in Africa!

MRS. SMITH

Aye, but the news of this day will be glad tidings for the lad.

MARY

It will be months before he can receive my letter—perchance a year. And then, perhaps, I'll reach him first!

CURTAIN ON TABLEAU

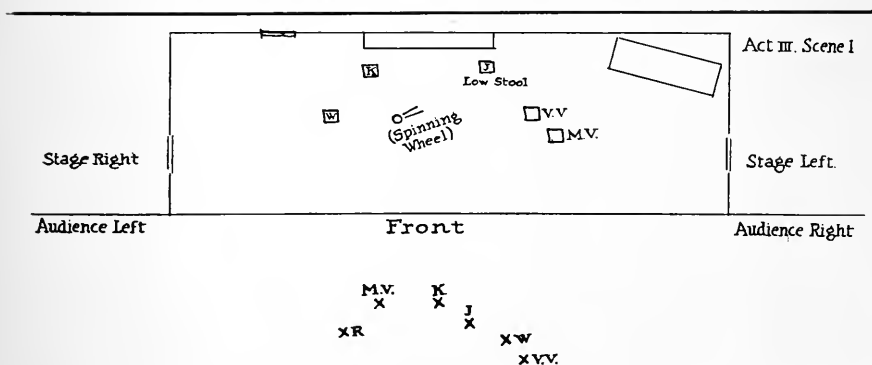
Vocal Music:

"The morning light is breaking."

ACT III

Scene I

The Boer homestead in South Africa more than a year after



General position of group for beginning of conversation and which should be changed easily and naturally as circumstances demand.

Robert Moffat's first visit. The room is the same as in Act II, scene 1. Vrau Vandervicker, Katrina, Wilhelmina, and Juliana are discovered seated, knitting, sewing and spinning by the fireside. Juliana, on a low stool, close to the fireplace, stage left, nurses her doll; beside her sits her mother, knitting. On the opposite side of the hearth sits Katrina, turning her spinning-wheel, while on her right is Wilhelmina, sewing. As Katrina turns her wheel, she hums "Highland Mary." Time: afternoon.

JULIANA

That is the song, Katrina, the young Mynheer Moffat used to sing.

WILHELMINA

I am so sorry he was killed.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Eh, such a pity—so young a man! I could weep almost as if he had been my own son.

KATRINA

Somehow I cannot credit he is dead. I believe Mynheer Moffat could win even the heart of Afrikaner by his love and kindness.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

The heart of a hyena of the desert, perhaps, but not of jaguar Afrikaner!

KATRINA

But mother, see how trustworthy and kind our Hottentot women have become since I gathered them together and taught them the Bible. My Cornelius says, when we are married he will build a school for our servants.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Soon you will have Cornelius Kip so distraught with the notions you got from the Mynheer Robert that he will leave his good farm and go on a mission to the black heathen. For shame, Katrina.

KATRINA

I think it not shame, mother, that my Cornelius is a good man.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Well, in heaven's name let him be a good Boer farmer then!

JULIANA

I loved the Mynheer Moffat. He carved me such beautiful dolls out of wood. Don't you think perhaps he might be yet alive, mother?

VRAU VANDERVICKER

How could he escape, child, from the camp of that cutthroat, no white man in the whole land to come to his rescue? Besides, your father has heard many rumors of his death.

(Enter Mynheer Vandervicker, stage left; hangs up his cap and pulls up a chair near his wife.)

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Well, well, Vrau, the news I told you of Mynheer Moffat is but too true.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

That he is dead, my husband?

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Brom Berker has seen his bones bleaching by the roadside.

KATRINA

Oh, father!

JULIANA

The good Mynheer Robert!

WILHELMINA

And I was wishing he could come again.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

'Tis but confirmation of the tales we've heard already. We were this minute talking of him. Did I not tell him it was madness for him to seek that monster? And he such a fine straight young man!

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

I did my best to warn him. But he had some wild notion that the Lord Almighty would preserve him. Not when you place your head into the lion's jaws, say I. *Nein, nein!* 'Tis against reason—against reason. *(A knock is heard.)* Some one knocks. What visitor comes now? *(He strides to the door, stage right, opens it, and then quickly shuts it again.)* Mother, mother, go into the kitchen!

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Why, husband, what makes it? You are white like you had seen a ghost!

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

(In great excitement.)

Go, I tell you! Wilhelmina, Juliana, go with your mother!

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Ach, the man has lost his mind! Come children.

(Exeunt Vrau Vandervicker, Wilhelmina, and Juliana, stage left.)

KATRINA

Father, what is it?

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

(Opening door a crack.)

Is it there still?

ROBERT MOFFAT

(Speaking from behind door.)

Won't you let me in, Mynheer Vandervicker? I am your old friend Robert Moffat.

KATRINA

Open the door, father!

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

God protect us!

(Enter Robert Moffat.)

MOFFAT

(Holding out his hand.)

Won't you shake hands with me, Mynheer?

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER.

(Refusing his hand.)

Who are you?

MOFFAT

I am Moffat. Have you forgotten me?

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

(Backing away across stage.)

Moffat! It is your ghost. Don't come near me. You have been long murdered by Afrikaner.

MOFFAT

(Feeling his hands and arms.)

But I am no ghost! Here, Katrina, you see that I am a living man.

KATRINA

(Coming forward and taking his hand.)

Mynheer Moffat!

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Everybody says you have been murdered. A man told me he had seen your bones. *(He remains staring at Moffat.)*

KATRINA

I must tell mother. *(Exit hastily stage left.)*

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

When did you rise from the dead?

MOFFAT

I never died. I have been living for more than a year peacefully with Afrikaner.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

This is the truth, man?

MOFFAT

The truth, as I stand before you.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

How did you escape that murderer?

MOFFAT

He is now a truly good man.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

That I cannot credit.

(Reenter Vrau Vandervicker and daughters, stage left.)

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Mynheer Robert, you live?

WILHELMINA AND JULIANA

Mynheer! Mynheer!

MOFFAT

How do you do, Vrau Vandervicker? You see I have returned safe and sound. *(Shakes hands with Vrau Vandervicker and the girls.)*

JULIANA

Father, Brom Berker did not see his bones!

MOFFAT

They are all in my own body yet, Juliana.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

(Sinking into a chair, stage left, while all seat themselves. Mynheer Vandervicker and Moffat, stage right, Juliana placing her stool close to her father's knees.)

Now let the Lord be praised! We had believed you dead these many months. No wonder my good man thought a ghost had visited us, and wished to spare me.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

And he says, wife, that Afrikaner has become a Christian.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

'Twere easier to believe Mynheer had risen from the dead than that.

MOFFAT

You would believe it could you see Christian Afrikaner sitting on a bench beside my schoolboys, diligently studying, or sitting for hours at a time in the shade of a great rock, reading his Bible, or pondering at night the great purposes of God, his eyes upon the stars.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Can this be he who stole the herds of white and black alike?

MOFFAT

Alas, of his many herds few cattle now remain, and those few he freely shares with those who have none, or who are sick and needy.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

He who was a terror to his enemies?

MOFFAT

Instead of raising his gun to settle a quarrel now, I have seen him step between the lifted spears and plead with one and then the other to act like brothers.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Anything can I credit but Afrikaner a peacemaker. There are seven wonders in the world; that would be the eighth!

MOFFAT

His brother, the terrible Titus, also is one of my best and truest friends, to whom I owe unnumbered kindnesses. Both Afrikaner and his brother, who gave me once scant welcome, are now my cherished friends.

KATRINA

(Softly to her mother.)

Did I not tell you?

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

If what you assert respecting that man Afrikaner be true, I have only one wish, and that is to see him before I die; and when you return, as sure as the sun is over our heads, I will go with you to see him, though he killed my uncle!

MOFFAT

(Starting, and then pausing a moment in reflection.)

Mynheer Vandervicker, you are a good man. I can trust you. You may see Afrikaner now, for he is in charge of my oxen, waiting at your gate. *(Rises, steps to the window, and pulls the curtain aside.)* Behold him. *(All rise in alarm.)*

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

(Looking, and speaking reverently.)

O God, what a miracle of thy power!

VRAU VANDERVICKER

(Tremblingly.)

My children, stay here by my side.

MOFFAT

No cause for fear, mother. Afrikaner would not lift so much as a finger against you. He is on his way with me now to visit the governor at the Cape.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

But the price upon his head!

MOFFAT

For three days his tribe deliberated, and then they decided to trust their chief to my protection. Will not the governor welcome a man who from murderer has turned peacemaker? Whose tribe no longer steals, but lives as honest herdsmen, making life and property safe in all Namaqualand? I think he and all good citizens will welcome Afrikaner, and on that faith I stake my life and reputation.

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

I will go out and see this man!

VRAU VANDERVICKER

My curiosity will take me to the door—but children, stay by me!

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

(Laughing over his shoulder as he goes out, stage right.)

Well, wife, you do not trust our Mynheer Moffat overmuch!

VRAU VANDERVICKER

But the man is Afrikaner!

JULIANA

I want to look on him. *(Exeunt Vrau Vandervicker and Juliana, stage right.)*

WILHELMINA

And I. *(Exit stage right.)*

KATRINA

(To Moffat, stage center.)

Mynheer, I have remembered my promise. I, too, have had cause for thanksgiving. Our women here are Christians now.

MOFFAT

My faithful Katrina!

KATRINA

And—Mynheer—in the year I shall wed Cornelius Kip. He has promised to build a school for our herdsmen and their children. He now believes, too, these black men and women have souls.

MOFFAT

You will be true missionaries.

KATRINA

Mynheer—we are so happy, Cornelius and I. Am I too bold, Mynheer—when you come back to live with Afrikaner and his tribe—will—the Mary of your homeland come with you? Will she be ready then?

MOFFAT

Katrina, that was a happy dream which I believed a year ago, but now—it's ended—for all time. She has written that her father never will consent.

KATRINA

Oh, Mynheer!

MOFFAT

All happiness here in this world is mutable, Katrina. We must not build too much upon it. I have been comforted by one who sticketh closer than a brother—when I've been most cast down. But do not think of me, Katrina. *(Shaking hands.)* I give you the best of my good wishes for your future happiness. Now, come and see my good friend Afrikaner.

CURTAIN

Instrumental Music:

"Christ the Lord is risen to-day," played very softly.

Scene 2

The same room as in previous scene, almost a year later. Vrau Vandervicker sits placidly spinning, stage right near fireplace, while Katrina and Juliana, their arms full of spring flowers, fill vases and jars till the room is a bower of beauty. Meanwhile one or all of them sing softly, "Christ the Lord is risen to-day," as they work. Time: morning.

KATRINA

There, does the room not look beautiful now, mother? I want Mynheer Moffat to feel that we are very glad to welcome him again. It is nearly a year since we

saw him last on his way to the Cape with Afrikaner. And to think that the governor hath sent Afrikaner home with gifts instead of punishing him! Mynheer Moffat will think we celebrate the triumph. Too bad Mynheer cannot go with him, but must teach another tribe now.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

The room looks like Easter time when I was a girl in Holland.

JULIANA

Well, it is nearly Easter, mother.

KATRINA

It will be the first real Easter for our people.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

You have your room all bright with blooms, but are you sure Mynheer will come to-day?

KATRINA

Father said Jacob had reported passing the ox-wagon of Mynheer Moffat when he drove in the new cattle. He must be near now.

(Enter Wilhelmina breathlessly, stage right.)

WILHELMINA

Mother, Katrina, I have seen the wagon of Mynheer Moffat coming, and there is a woman in it!

VRAU VANDERVICKER

A woman! How comes that?

WILHELMINA

Jacob says it is a wife!

KATRINA

Mother! Can it be Mynheer Moffat has married at the Cape?

VRAU VANDERVICKER

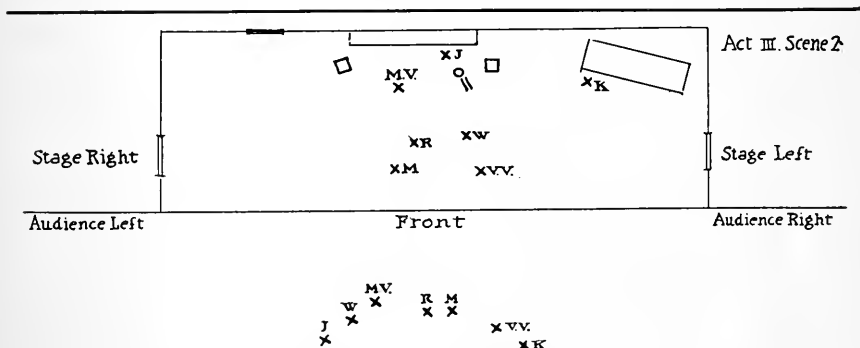
And would not that be good news? Poor young man, no one to do for him. He needs a wife.

KATRINA

But mother, he was betrothed to a woman of his homeland and she loved him. I told you that.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Ja, but you said she had broken troth.



1. Relative positions for the introduction of Mary to Frau Vandervicker.
2. Last tableau group.

KATRINA

No, not that. She could not marry him. Her father would not give consent.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Well, well, what would you? She was many thousand miles away.

KATRINA

Oh, mother, mother—would my Cornelius—oh, you do not understand! And I thought him true as a knight. And then to take a second best! I do not wish to see him.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Why child, what ails you? You must welcome Mynheer Robert.

WILHELMINA

(*At window.*)

He is almost here.

KATRINA

No, I cannot.

JULIANA

It isn't "Highland Mary," sister?

KATRINA

Oh, no, it isn't. She could not come.

JULIANA

Then I won't like this new one either.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Come, be sensible, children. (*Talking is heard without.*) There they are at the door. Do not spoil the welcome for Mynheer.

(*Enter Mynheer Vandervicker, Robert Moffat, and Mary Moffat, stage right.*)

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Vrau, daughters, here are our Robert Moffat and his wife!

(*Katrina and Juliana retreat, stage left.*)

MOFFAT

(*Shaking hands, stage center.*)

My good Vrau Vandervicker, I am so glad to see you. This is my bride.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

(*Shaking hands with Mary.*)

I bid you a cordial welcome to our home. Our Mynheer Robert is like a son to us.

MARY

I am so glad to know you, Vrau Vandervicker. Robert has told me much of your kindness to him. As his wife I want to thank you.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Let me take your cloak and hat. (*Suits action to words and lays wraps on chair.*)

MOFFAT

And this is Wilhelmina (*leading her forward*). She's a good girl—one of the best. And Katrina—where is she? (*Katrina courtesies coldly.*) Ah, here, behind the flowers [*chair or other object*]. This is Miss Katrina Vandervicker, one of my most helpful friends.

MARY.

(*Going forward and holding out her hand.*)

How do you do, Katrina?—May I call you so? Robert has told me of your sympathy and zeal for the cause. (*Katrina courtesies, but does not take the hand.*)

MOFFAT
(*Aside.*)

Why, Katrina, have I offended? What have I done that you do not care to welcome Mary?

KATRINA
(*Looking up for the first time.*)

Mary? Mary?

MOFFAT
Why, of course, the Mary of my homeland. You won my secret from me by your woman's intuition.

KATRINA
But you said, Mynheer—

JULIANA
Is it "Highland Mary," Mynheer Moffat?

MOFFAT
And who else could it be, my Juliana?

KATRINA
Oh, Mynheer! But you said she could never come, never!

MOFFAT
God in his good providence brought it to pass. Her parents gave their consent at last.

KATRINA
(*Coming out.*)
Mynheer—can you forgive me? I am ashamed.

MOFFAT
But I do not understand.

VRAU VANDERVICKER
She thought your bride was some one else, Mynheer.

MARY
(*Smiling.*)
I thank you for your loyalty, Katrina. (*Takes her hand.*)
(*During the following dialog Moffat walks over to Mynheer Vandervicker, stage right, and they comment together from time to time on what is going forward. Wilhelmina and Juliana also exchange comments, stage right.*)

KATRINA
I welcome you a thousand times, Vrau Moffat. The Mynheer Moffat needed you.

VRAU VANDERVICKER
But, Vrau Mary, surely you have won him from his plan to go back to the heathen tribes to live among them? No white woman could keep house in such a place.

MARY
But I long to go there as much as Robert, Vrau Vandervicker. I came from England for that purpose.

VRAU VANDERVICKER
Impossible!

MARY
'Tis the work I would do above all other.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Eh, but can you endure the long weariness of the wagon drawn by the slow creeping oxen, the burning sun on the desert, the thirst and hunger, and the howling of the beast of prey at night?

MARY

I can, God helping me, and be right merry by the way.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

But when you reach the tribe, there will be no white woman there to welcome you.

MARY

Then will I make friends of the black.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Their customs are not your customs. I know the women of the Bushmen.

MARY

I will learn their customs.

VRAU VANDERVICKER

They are thieves and vile.

MARY

Did not Christ die for them?

VRAU VANDERVICKER

Their tribal wars are frequent. You will dwell in terror. Long nights will you keep vigil. And what if there be children in your hut to share your peril?

MARY

I can drink this cup also.

(Robert comes close to Mary's right.)

VRAU VANDERVICKER

And you would endure all this for Robert?

MARY

For Robert, yes—but not for him alone. For I am called not to the lot of ordinary human bliss, but to the companionship of a great purpose and a great endeavor. You have told me, Vrau Vandervicker, of the trials before me. What about the joys? When these heathen men and women put off their age-long sins, and put on Christ, what then?

VRAU VANDERVICKER

They'll be slow enough before that transformation.

MARY

Still it will surely come!

ROBERT

Have I not one witness to give us faith for coming years, Vrau Vandervicker?

MYNHEER VANDERVICKER

Aye, that miracle, Afrikaner! Wife, remember him!

MARY

Hark, what was that?

(A chorus off stage is heard singing, "Awake my soul in joyful lays.")

KATRINA

It is my little band of Bushman Christians. They sing to welcome you and Mynheer Robert.

MARY

A happy augur for our future life!

Tableau:

Robert and Mary in the center of the group. Singing continues softly as curtain falls.

THE END

Highland Mary

AIR — " KATHERINE OGIE "

Robert Burns. (1759 — 1796)

Arranged by Colin Goe

mf

1. Ye banks and braes, and streams a-round The
 2. How sweet - ly bloom'd the gay green birk, How
 3. Wl' mon - y a vow and lock'd em-brace, Our
 4. O! pale, pale now those ro - sy lips I

Andantino.

p

cas - tile o' Mont - gom - er - y, Green be your woods, and fair your flow'rs, Your
 rich the haw - thorn's blos - som, As, un - der - neath their fra - grant shade, I
 part - ing was fu' ten - der, And, pledg - ing aft to meet a - gain, We
 aft ha'e kis'd sae fond - ly! And clos'd for aye the spark - ling glance That

wa - ters nev - er drum - lie. There slin - mer first un - fault her robes, And there the lang - est
 clasp'd her to my bos - om! The gold - en hours, on an - gel wings, Flew o'er me and my
 tore our - sels a - sun - der. But, O! fell death's un - time - ly frost, That nipt my flow'r sae
 dwelt on me sae kind - ly! And mould'ring now in si - lent dust That heart that lo'd me

D.C.

tar - ry; For there I took the last fare - well O' my sweet High - land Ma - ry.
 dear - le; For dear to me as light and life Was my sweet High - land Ma - ry.
 ear - ly! Now, green's the sod, and cauld's the clay, That wraps my High - land Ma - ry.
 dear - ly! But still, with - in my bos - om's core. Shall live my High - land Ma - ry.

D.C.

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ROBERT



MARY

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